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## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

# Co-funding for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND (MSCA COFUND) Doctoral Programmes 2027

- Application should be submitted to the Knowledge Foundation no later than **15:00 PM, November 15, 2026**.
  - Funding decisions will be announced by end of December 2026.
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### About the Knowledge Foundation

*The Knowledge Foundation is a funder with the mission to strengthen Sweden's competitiveness. The foundation funds research and competence development at Swedish university colleges and newer universities when conducted in collaboration with the business sector. The Foundation's calls are open to all scientific and artistic subject areas.*

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## Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

[Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions \(MSCA\)](#)<sup>1</sup> is the EU's leading funding programme for doctoral training and researcher mobility. The programme aims to support researchers at all career stages and strengthen European research through international and cross-sectoral collaboration. MSCA funds various initiatives that enable researchers to develop in a global context, while also contributing to knowledge transfer between academia, industry, and society.

## MSCA COFUND

[MSCA COFUND](#)<sup>2</sup> is a part of MSCA that provides financial support for doctoral or postdoctoral training. Through MSCA COFUND, regional, national, and international programmes for doctoral training and career development are co-funded. The EU aims to promote high standards, good working conditions, sustainable education, and international, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral mobility through this funding mechanism.

A practical handbook for MSCA COFUND applicants, developed by an EU project for National Contact Points (NCP) for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, is available at [RADIANCE MSCA COFUND](#)<sup>3</sup>.

## Co-funding for MSCA COFUND doctoral programmes

MSCA COFUND requires co-funding from the applicant organisation. Therefore, the Knowledge Foundation offers, in this call, an opportunity for Swedish university colleges and newer universities<sup>4</sup> to apply for funds to cover parts of this co-funding, should the project be awarded funding from MSCA COFUND.

## Co-funding from the Knowledge Foundation can only be applied for in projects within the MSCA COFUND Doctoral Programmes 2027.

### Objectives of the call

The aim of the Knowledge Foundation's initiative to co-fund awarded MSCA COFUND projects is to increase the participation of the Foundation's target group universities in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

## Purpose of the call and contribution to the development of strong research and education environments

The Knowledge Foundation wants to support the building of strong research and educational environments that create value for academia, industry, and society. The Foundation's funding forms contribute in various ways to enabling environments to establish and maintain a strong national and international scientific or artistic position, which also constitutes a profile area for the university. For more information on the Knowledge Foundation's view of strong research and educational environments, see [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://marie-skłodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://marie-skłodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/actions/cofund?>

<sup>3</sup> [https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/sites/default/files/2025-05/msca\\_cofund\\_2025\\_radiance\\_handbook\\_0.pdf](https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/sites/default/files/2025-05/msca_cofund_2025_radiance_handbook_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, Halmstad University, Jönköping University, Karlstad University, Konstfack, Kristianstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm University of the Arts, Swedish Defence University, Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Södertörn University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Skövde, University West, Örebro University.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/strong-research-and-educational-environments/>

Co-funding of MSCA COFUND doctoral programmes specifically aims to promote the development of research and education environments through a significant addition of doctoral students. The design of MSCA COFUND doctoral programmes requires that doctoral students are recruited internationally, which also contributes to increased internationalisation of the environment. According to the MSCA mobility rule, an eligible doctoral student must not have spent more than 12 months in Sweden during the past three years. The call also contributes to research and educational environments expanding and strengthening their collaboration with industry.

## Application framework

Co-funding of MSCA COFUND doctoral programmes within this call requires a (later) submitted and granted application within the MSCA COFUND doctoral programmes 2027 (hereafter referred to as the MSCA COFUND application). The project, i.e., the doctoral programme, must therefore be planned and implemented in accordance with the call requirements for MSCA COFUND, which includes a high international standard regarding quality, mobility, and career development for the doctoral students.

Within this call, the Knowledge Foundation will rely on the assessment conducted by the Research Executive Agency within MSCA COFUND, as well as its decision on approval or rejection. However, the Foundation will conduct a preliminary review of the project proposal to ensure that it complies with the Foundation's statutes (see [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>6</sup> and meets the formal requirements (see more under *Preparation and assessment*). Applicants must therefore submit an application to the Knowledge Foundation no later than 15 November for a review of the possibility of co-funding should the MSCA COFUND project be granted. A decision can be expected in end of December 2026. Upon approval of the application, the Knowledge Foundation will issue a letter of intent that includes the Foundation's co-funding in the event of a approved project.

If the project is awarded funds from MSCA COFUND, an agreement will be established between the Knowledge Foundation and the university regarding the co-funding.

## Terms and conditions

### Applicants

Swedish university colleges and newer universities<sup>7</sup> can apply within this call. The Knowledge Foundation welcomes applications in all subject areas. If the application concerns an artistic research area, the term *scientific* is replaced by *artistic* in the call text.

Several universities may collaborate in the project if it strengthens the application and the project, but only one university can be the main applicant and contracting party with the Knowledge Foundation. The foundation can only fund activities conducted at universities within its target group.

It is also possible to apply for funding as a co-applicant institution if a target group university<sup>6</sup> is a co-applicant in an international application, or in a national application where another Swedish university outside the Foundation's target group is the main applicant.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/about-the-knowledge-foundation/statutes/>

<sup>7</sup> Blekinge Institute of Technology, Dalarna University, Halmstad University, Jönköping University, Karlstad University, Konstfack, Kristianstad University, Linnaeus University, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm University of the Arts, Swedish Defence University, Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Södertörn University, University of Borås, University of Gävle, University of Skövde, University West, Örebro University.

## Participation of the university

The project must have a project manager who is operationally responsible for the implementation of the project. The project manager must have a doctoral degree and be employed by the university no later than the project start. The university must also have an appointed project owner. The project owner, who must have personnel and budget responsibility at a higher level at the university, is responsible for ensuring that there are conditions to implement the project and for monitoring its implementation. The project manager and project owner must not be the same person. The application should also be well anchored at the highest level and therefore be signed by the vice-chancellor.

## Participation of the business sector and other partners

Within the MSCA COFUND call, there is no formal requirement for co-funding from industry, and all types of partners are welcome to participate. However, MSCA COFUND expects active involvement of industry in the training, as industry represents future employers and, through its involvement, strengthens the relevance of competence needs.

In addition, projects funded by the Knowledge Foundation must always be designed so that, in addition to contributing to the current research front, they also contribute to the development of the business sector. To be granted co-funding from the Knowledge Foundation, the project must therefore be conducted in co-production with business partners. For more information on the Knowledge Foundation's view of co-production, see [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>8</sup>. The short- and long-term relevance of the collaboration for the participating parties and how collaboration in the project will take place must be stated in the application to the Knowledge Foundation.

If it strengthens the project, other Swedish universities outside the Foundation's target group may also participate.

Any connections, such as financial or personal ties, between participating parties, between any party and the university, or between any party and an individual project participant, must be stated and clarified in the application form and in the project plan. Specify, for example, company connections, shareholding, board positions, employment, or consultancy activities.

## Financial framework and budgeting

Applications to the Knowledge Foundation must concern co-funding of an MSCA COFUND doctoral programme conducted in collaboration with the business sector. The foundation can only fund activities conducted at universities within its target group. The amount that can be applied for from the Knowledge Foundation must not exceed 50 percent of the total co-funding in the MSCA COFUND application. The co-funding may also amount to a maximum of SEK 1 million per doctoral degree at universities within the foundation's target group (calculated based on full-time studies over four years).

The Knowledge Foundation's funding is followed up at the final reporting of the project and if necessary, adjusted in relation to the actual progress of the doctoral students at the end of the project. The foundation's funds should mainly be used for doctoral salaries, supervision, and other direct costs for the doctoral students. In addition to salary costs, direct costs incurred within the project at the applicant university/universities may be included in the budget.

Information on eligible costs and instructions for budgeting funds are available in the document "General Terms and Conditions for Projects Funded by the Knowledge Foundation," found on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>9</sup>. The application should not include overhead costs (OH); instead, an OH

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/co-production/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/funding-and-assessment/general-terms-and-conditions-for-projects/>

surcharge of 20 percent of the requested amount will be added by the Knowledge Foundation if the application is approved.

## Application

Applications are submitted via the project manager's account in the Knowledge Foundation's application system *SBS Manager* via [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>10</sup>. Supplementing the application after the deadline is not possible.

## Application appendices

The following appendices must be attached to the application (as PDF files) in the order below. The structure of the appendices must follow the headings specified for each appendix. Under each heading, the main points of the information the Foundation expects are stated, but applicants may provide additional information deemed appropriate based on the focus of the call.

The application can be written in Swedish or English. Note that all body text in Appendix 1 must use Arial font, size 11 pt, and single line spacing.

### Appendix 1. Project plan

Maximum 3 pages (including any references). Numbered pages. Upload under "Project plan."

- **Contribution of the project to the development of the research and education environment.** Describe the overall research and educational environment where the project will be conducted. Also describe how the project will contribute to the development of the research and educational environment, especially focusing on the contribution of the doctoral students, internationalisation aspects, and collaboration with industry.
- **Focus of the MSCA COFUND application.** Describe the planned MSCA COFUND application's subject area and preliminary focus areas for the included doctoral projects, including subjects for doctoral degrees. Also provide an overall plan for the content of the doctoral training.
- **Project group.** Briefly describe how the project group is composed in terms of subject and competence. Explain how gender equality aspects have been considered in the composition of the project group.
- **Collaboration.** Attach a brief account of how collaboration will be included in the MSCA COFUND project and a description of the short- and long-term relevance for the participating parties.
- **Budget.** Describe and justify the costs listed in the budget table so that it is clear what the budget items consist of and how they relate to the project's goals and planned activities.

### Appendix 2. Project participants

The template for project participants (Staff in the project) is available as an Excel file from [www.kks.se](http://www.kks.se), but must be converted and attached to the application as a PDF file (ensure that the entire Excel sheet fits on one PDF page). Upload under "Other appendices."

Provide information on all planned project participants from the university/universities in the table (does not apply to the doctoral students in the planned doctoral programme). From other participating parties, only key persons need to be specified.

### Appendix 3. CVs

Maximum 1 page per person. Upload under "Other appendices."

Attach CVs for all persons within the project group who are crucial for the implementation of the project.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/apply-and-report/>

The Foundation applies a broadened review of academic merits (more info on [the Foundation's website](#)<sup>11</sup>). Therefore, all academically active project participants must present a selection of the merits and experiences that are most relevant to the project and the programme form. *For example*, use the following categories:

- **Education and degrees**
- **Employment and assignments**
- **Research output:** specify up to ten (10) research results. In addition to scientific publications, these may include, for example, artistic merits, instrumental or product development, datasets, software, patents, process or policy development, and implementation of research results.
- **Teaching:** pedagogical merits including, for example, teaching, supervision, educational development including development of open educational resources and learning objects (teaching and learning materials).
- **Collaboration:** with academia, the business sector, or other societal actors as well as communication efforts.
- **Leadership:** project management, organisational development, assessment assignments, centre management, institutional service, awarded funding.

#### Appendix 6. Signatures from the university

Appendix template for signatures is downloaded from the Foundation's website. To be uploaded under *Other appendices*.

The application must be signed by the project manager, the project owner, and the vice-chancellor. The project manager's signature implies responsibility for the described implementation. The project owner and the vice-chancellor assure through their signatures that the university approves the project and will be involved according to the project description.

The signature appendix should be signed either manually or electronically, for example by using eduSign, GetAccept, ebox, or similar systems.

## Preparation and assessment

Within the framework of this call, the Knowledge Foundation will not conduct an expert review but will instead rely on the assessment of the MSCA COFUND application conducted by MSCA COFUND. The foundation's office will therefore only review the application to ensure that the project meets the formal requirements and that co-funding is possible in the event of an approved MSCA COFUND project. The decision on co-funding is made by the Foundation after the office's review and approval.

Upon approval of the application, the Knowledge Foundation will issue a letter of intent that includes the Foundation's co-funding in the event of an approved project.

A copy of the complete application to the MSCA COFUND Doctoral Programmes 2027 must be sent to the Knowledge Foundation as a PDF file no later than one week after the closing of the MSCA COFUND 2027 call.

## Formal requirements

The following requirements must be met for the application to be considered for the Knowledge Foundation's co-funding of an approved MSCA COFUND project. Applications that do not meet the requirements will be rejected for formal reasons.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.kks.se/en/broadened-review-of-academic-merits-and-advanced-assessment/>

- The applicant university must belong to the Knowledge Foundation's target group and applied-for amount may only fund activities conducted at universities within its target group.
- The project proposal must comply with the Foundation's statutes.
- The application must concern funds to cover parts of the co-funding for an application within the MSCA COFUND 2027 call.
- The project manager must have a doctoral degree and be employed by the university no later than the project start.
- The application must include appendices according to the call's instructions.
- The project must demonstrate collaboration with industry and describe the benefit for industry.
- The application must be signed by the vice-chancellor, project owner, and project manager.
- Project funds applied for from the Knowledge Foundation must not exceed 50 percent of the total co-funding in the upcoming MSCA COFUND application. The co-funding may also amount to a maximum of SEK 1 million per doctoral degree at universities within the foundation's target group (calculated based on full-time studies over four years).
- The project period must, in accordance with MSCA COFUND, be a maximum of five years.
- The project must start no earlier than January 1, 2028.